

## **GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (GRP) FY 2004 POLICIES - MASSACHUSETTS**

### **Eligibility**

1. To be eligible for GRP, land must be privately owned (land owned by Federal, State or local government is not eligible) **and** must be grassland, shrubland **or** located in an area that has historically been dominated by grasses, forbs and shrubs and which has the potential to provide habitat for animal and plant populations of significant ecological value if the land is restored to a natural grassland or shrubland condition.
2. Massachusetts does not have a minimum acreage requirement; however, all acres offered under an application must be contiguous (i.e., share a common field boundary).
3. Incidental lands (forest, wetlands, etc.) may be included for enrollment to allow for the efficient administration of an easement or rental agreement.
4. Only landowners may participate in the easement option.
5. Both landowners and tenants may participate in the rental options; however, a tenant must provide evidence of control for the duration of the agreement period.

### **Enrollment Options**

1. Rental Agreements – 10, 15, 20 or 30 years in length. Participant receives 100% of the GRP rental rate per acre for each year of the agreement.
2. 30 Year Easement – Participant receives 30% of the appraised fair market value of the offered acreage **minus** the grazing value (as determined by a Certified Land Appraiser).
3. Permanent Easement – Participant receives 100% of the appraised fair market value of the offered acreage **minus** the grazing value (as determined by a Certified Land Appraiser).
4. Restoration Agreements are available in conjunction with a rental agreement or easement. Only practices required for improving the grassland will be cost shared – no maintenance practices will be cost shared. See attached sheet for eligible practices and cost share rates.

**(NOTE: In FY 2004, easements costing more than \$7,500 per acre cannot be accepted into the program).**

### **Permitted Uses**

1. Common grazing practices that maintain the viability of the grassland species.
2. Haying, mowing and seed production – acreage may not be hayed or mown during the primary nesting season (April 15<sup>th</sup> to July 30<sup>th</sup>).
3. Fire rehabilitation and the construction of fire breaks and fences.
4. Hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, bird watching and other non-motorized recreational activities.
5. Participants are required to follow a Conservation Plan.

### **Prohibited Uses**

1. Mowing or haying except as described above
2. Production of crops, fruit trees, vineyards or any other agricultural commodity that requires breaking the soil surface.
3. Any other activity that would disturb the surface of the land, except for appropriate land management activities included in the Conservation Plan for the management of the grassland, shrubland.